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PAGE 01 SANTIA 06822 282248Z
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Chile Project (#S1999000030)
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E.O. 12065: GDS: 9/28/85 (CLARE, DANIEL H.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM PINT CI
SUBJ: THE DAY THE CARDINAL BLINKED

1. (C) SUMMARY: CHILEAN CARDINAL SILVA READ ONLY SELECTED PORTIONS OF HIS PREPARED HOMILY GIVEN AT THE TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY MEMORIAL MASS SEPTEMBER 18. HE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED THE UNEXPURGATED VERSION, WHICH CONTAINED POINTED CRITICISMS OF THE GOVERNMENT. AS THE CARDINAL LED CHILEAN BISHOPS TO ROME TO MEET THE POPE, HE WAS CLEARLY DEFENSIVE ABOUT THE WAYS HE HAD HANDLED THE SITUATION. THE GENERALLY ACTIVIST CHILEAN CLERGY ARE DISMAYED THAT THE CARDINAL CAPITULATED IN THE FACE OF PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S BLUFF TO WALK OUT OF THE MASS. AT THIS POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT JUNCTURE IN CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS, THE CARDINAL BLINKED. END SUMMARY.

2. (L) RAUL CARDINAL SILVA HAD AN ENFURIATED CLERGY ON HIS HANDS AS HE PREPARED HIS HOMILY FOR THE TRADITIONAL "TE DEUM" MASS HELD AT THE CATHEDRAL IN THE PRESENCE OF THE JUNTA TO COMMEMORATE CHILEAN INDEPENDENCE ON SEPTEMBER 18. SOME 200 PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS HAD PETITIONED HIM NOT TO APPEAR AT THE SERVICE IN PROTEST TO THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT HAD RENEGED ON ITS AGREEMENT TO RETURN THE LONG-DEAD BODIES TO FAMILIES AND HAD INSTEAD BURIED THEM SECRETLY IN A COMMON GRAVE AT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL
PAGE 02 SANTIA 06822 282248Z

ISLA DE MAIPO. THE EPISCOPAL BISHOPS' COUNCIL WAS IRKED AT THE HARSH LANGUAGE PINOCHET RESERVED FOR THEIR STUDY OF THE GOV AGRARIAN POLICY. SIMMERING IN THE BACKGROUND WAS AN ONGOING DISPUTE OVER CONTROL OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

3. (C) FACED WITH THE CHOICE OF NOT APPEARING AT THE MASS, NOT READING ANY HOMILY, OR GIVING A STIFF AND CRITI-

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CONFIDENTIAL

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Case Number: s199900006

CAL ONE, THE CARDINAL OPTED FOR THE LAST POSITION. IS DECISION SOON CAME TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION AND, AFTER THE SPEECH HAD BEEN PREPARED AND SENT TO THE MIMEO-GRPAH, THE CARDINAL BEGAN TO RECEIVE SOME VISITORS. ONE OF THEM WAS THE GOC'S DESIGNATED LIAISON WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, RETIRED GENERAL COURT. ON SEPTEMBER 17, COURT TOLD THE CARDINAL HE RAN THE RISK OF HAVING PINOCHET AND THE JUNTA WALK OUT OF THE SERVICE IF HE DELIVERED A SEVERE TEXT. THE CARDINAL, BY ONE REPORT, INITIALLY STRUCK BY HIS GUNS. REPORTEDLY THE PAOAL NUNCIO ALSO ENCOURAGED THE CARDINAL TO GO EASY. VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY STAFFERS BELIEVE THAT YET ANOTHER SENIOR GOC OFFICIAL* WHOSE IDENTITY THEY DO NOTT KNOW, ALSO CONVEYED PINOCHET'S BLUFF TO THE CARDINAL.

4, (C) THE GOC'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE "TE DEUM" WOULD NOT BE BROADCAST ON NATIONWIDE NETWORK, THE RATHER MYSTERIOUS DISCONNECTION OF THE PHONE LINE CARRYING THE BORADCAST FROM THE CATHEDRAL TO CHURDCH-OWNED RADIO CHILENS, AND THE LOOK OF OBVIOUS RELIEF AND PLEASURE PINOCHET GAVE HIS JUNTA-COLLEAGUE MERINO AS THE CARDINAL PROCEEDED READING THE MESSAGE -- ALL TEND TO CONFIRM THAT THE GOC ITSELF WAS NOT CERTAIN WHAT THE CARDINAL MIGHT DO.

5 (U) WHAT THE CARDINAL DID WAS TO DROP PARAGRAPHS REMINDING THE AUDIENCE THAT SIX YEARS AGO, RIGHT AFTER THE COUP, THE CHURCH HAD URGED THE NEW REGIME TO BE MODERATE AND TO RETAIN THE GAINS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS UNDER PRE-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTIA 06822 282248Z

VIOUS REGIMES, AND HAD TAKEN AT FACE VALUE THE PROMISES OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE SOON INSTITUTIONAL NORMALITY. HE OMITTED PARAGRPAHS STATING THAT THE CHURCH'S CURRENT POSITION SHOULD BE TAKEN IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS INITIAL POST-COUP DECLARATION AND ITS PERSISTENT EFFORTS SINCE THAT TIME TO RESTORE PEACE ANDNATIONAL HARMONY.

6. (U) THE CARDINAL THEN PASSED OVER PARAGRAPHS QUOTING THE POPE'S VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREDOMS: "IFSHUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED IN TIME OF PEACE, THAT IS PARTICULARLY SAD, "VIOLATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS EVENTUALLY HURT NATIONAL SECURITY." "THE ESSENTIAL BASIS OF THE STATE, AS A POLITICAL COMMUNITY, CONSITS IN THE FACT THAT THE SOCIETY AND ITS MEMBERS, THE PEOPLE, ARE SOVEREIGN REGARDING THEIR FATE," AND "THE COMMON GOOD, WHICH THE STATE IS TO SERVE, CAN ONLY BE FULLY REALIZED WHEN ALL OF ITS CITIZENS ARE SECURE IN THEIR RIGHTS." SINCE THE OMISSIONS CONSTITUTED AT LEAST HALF THE HOMILY, ITS BREVITY WOULD HAVE CAUSED COMMENT EVEN IF -- PERHAPS

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Case Number: s199900006

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BECAUSE HE HAD NOTT GOTTEN THE WORD - A PERSON CONTROLLING SOME OF THE COPIES HAD NOTT RELEASED THE FULL TEXT TO SEVERAL JOURNALISTS. THIS "LEAK" ENSURED THAT THE MEDIA NOTED NEXT DAY THE EXCISIONS THE CARDINAL MADE. THE CARDINAL SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO MAKE PUBLIC THE ORIGINAL TEXT.

7. (L) A FEW DAYS LATER, CHILEAN BISHOPS LEFT FOR EUROPE ON A TRIP THAT WOULD HAVE THEM MEETING THE POPE AND VISITING ROME. THE CARDINAL, ACCOMPANIED BY FATHER CHRISTIAN PRECHT -- EX-VICAR OF SOLIDARITY -- DEPARTED EARLY THIS WEEK TO JOIN THEM. IN AIRPORT STATEMENTS HERE AND IN LIMA, THE CARDINAL REACTED DEFENSIVELY WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS HANDLING OF THE SITUATION ("I DIDN'T WANT TO STEP ON ANYONE'S TOES").

8. (C) COMMENT: THE CARDINAL HAS BEEN CAREFUL NOTT TO PUSH RELATIONS WITH THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT TO A BREAKING

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04

SANTIA 06822 282248Z

POINT. ACCORDING TO PEOPLE CLOSE TO HIM, HE HAS BEEN SUFFERING FROM A PERSISTENT FLU AND IS GENERALLY DEPRESSED. IN ADDITION TO DIVERGENT OPINIONS WITHIN THE CHILEAN CHURCH, HE IS NOTT SURE WHERE THE POPE STANDS ON CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN TEMPORAL CONCERNS. HAVING THE SOUTHERN ZONE MEDIATION IN VATICAN HANDS IS ANOTHER FACTOR THE CARDINAL MUST HAVE WIGHED.

9. (C) PINOCHET, TOO, HAS A NUMBER OF IRONS IN THE FIRE NOW. IT APPEARS OBVIOUS TO US, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS IN NO POSITON TO STOMP OUT IN DISGUST. PLAYING HIS HAND BOLDLY, THE PRESIDENT BROUGHT HOME ANOTHER POT.
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